

The Old Paths

Volume 19, Issue 14

June 3, 2012

“Godly Characteristics Of Preachers”

Jarrod Jacobs

Knowing that the preacher is set forth in the “public light” more than others due to the public nature of his work, I thought it would be good for us to examine what God considers godly characteristics of a preacher of the gospel. Many are confused at times when it comes to the nature of a preacher’s work, and how he ought/ought not be. Let us take the Bible, and learn from God what ought and ought not be a part of the preacher’s life.

While we could study this subject in a number of ways, I have chosen to focus this article on I Thessalonians 2:1-12. Please read that section of Scripture, and then study with me. Godly characteristics that ought to be seen in the life of a preacher include:

Boldness (v. 2)

Boldness is missing from much of the preaching we are hearing today. Yet, this was characteristic of the apostle Paul’s preaching (Acts 13:46, 14:3; etc.). In fact, boldness is encouraged in the lives of God’s people no less than 31 times in the Scripture. It is imperative that we be “bold,” i.e., “to be frank in utterance, or confident in spirit and demeanor to venture plainly” (Strong’s) in preaching. Certainly, this was the case when Paul entered Thessalonica, and preached Christ with boldness in

the synagogues and the city (Acts 17:2-6). Boldness is needed today when speaking to folks about sin and error and how to correct that. Let us never mistake boldness for arrogance, though. There is a vast difference between the two!

“Speaking The Gospel of God In The Midst Of Much Conflict” (v. 2)

Let no one deceive himself into thinking that preaching is “easy” and “free from problems or concerns.” A reading of Acts 17:4-8, reveals some of the conflict (“an effort or anxiety:-- ... fight, race,” Strong’s) Paul faced while in Thessalonica! Preaching the gospel is not for the faint-of-heart, nor the thin-skinned! Preaching the gospel is not for the “social butterflies”! Preaching demands courage, a true love for souls, and a commitment to fight against Satan’s schemes!

There is conflict associated with preaching because when folks are faced with the reality of their sins, some will balk at this fact, and wish to “kill the messenger” instead of listen to the message. Paul faced this at Thessalonica, and in many other places he preached (Acts 17:5, 18:12-16, etc.). Conflict is a part of the work! Thus, the reason for the military imagery used by Paul in his writing (II Tim. 2:3-4), as well as the reminder that Christians wear the “whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:13-18)! This is needed when in a spiritual conflict!

Not Deceitful (v. 3)

Paul had no intention of misleading people. He spoke the truth (Rom. 9:1; II Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20). Any man who wishes to preach must be of an honest character (Rom. 12:17; II Cor. 13:7-8; Eph. 4:29; Col. 3:9). Dishonesty/Deceit will ruin a man’s reputation and his effectiveness in the gospel. How can one be expected to be taken seriously when spreading the gospel, if he is dishonest in business dealings, or will not pay his bills, etc.? (Rom. 2:21-23)

“Not To Please Man, But God Nor Did We Seek Glory From People” (v. 4, 6)

Let the preacher never forget who he is serving! Paul understood this, and not only did he tell the Thessalonians his work was to please God, he also told the Galatians, “*If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ*” (Gal. 1:10). Preachers work FOR the Lord, and WITH the brethren! Let there be no mistake about that. Reversing the prepositions (“for” and “with”) is the recipe for apostasy. To borrow a phrase from Christ, if a preacher is preaching so as to please men, “he has his reward”!

Not Using Flattering Words (v. 5)

Flattering words do nothing to help a lost soul. Christ taught His apostles not to use such words (Matt. 23:7-12). Even Elihu knew not to “*show partiality to any man or use flattery toward any person*” (Job 32:21). Let us learn that lesson! Such actions can destroy the work a preacher is doing in a location.

Not Covetous (v. 5)

Unfortunately, “greed” is a temptation that can strike at anyone (Jas. 1:14-15). Therefore, a preacher preaching for

money will not preach for the Lord (I Tim. 6:10)! God said this is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Yes, may every preacher be paid according to his work (I Cor. 9:14; II Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15). Yet, let God defeat every man preaching for money. (There is a *great* difference between those two men!) I thank God for men like Paul who sacrificed in years gone by so that the gospel was preached in our country and souls were saved. They may have had a small amount of this world's goods, but they were rich in faith and bore much fruit for Christ. May their tribe increase!!

"Gentle" (v. 7)

Preachers must remember to be gentle when dealing with people. Men, like sheep, must be led to the living water, not driven (Ps. 23:2; Jn. 4:10, 14). Let us show that gentle side by caring for those who are in a lost condition and wish to repent, as well as for the saved folks who need encouragement (I Thess. 5:14). Therefore, note that there is a time for having *"mercy on those who doubt"* and a time to *"save others by snatching them out of the fire"* (Jude 22-23). *"Boldness"* and *"gentleness"* are not contradictory terms as Paul shows in this very text (v. 2, 7). A preacher must have characteristics of both in his life!

"Labor And Toil" (v. 9)

A stereo-type often joked about is the "lazy preacher." A preacher mustn't be guilty of contributing to this stereo-type! Preaching demands self-motivation, because spreading God's word is work from beginning to end (II Tim. 4:5)! It is hard work to study (Ecc. 12:12) and prepare to teach, and then to go and be active in teaching others (II Tim. 4:2-5). It is hard work to look for avenues where the gospel can be spread

and then being active in pursuing them! When preachers forget this, they open themselves up to being tempted by covetousness, i.e., just preaching for the money! (see: v. 5) There is much to do in the Lord's kingdom! It is *"labor and toil"*!

Behaving "Holy And Righteously And Blamelessly" (v. 10)

How necessary it is that a preacher's behavior reflect what he preaches! Many a preacher has ruined his reputation, and even caused great harm to a congregation by not living what he was preaching. This is also true when folks in the world see Christians not living up to what the Lord teaches in Scripture! A "good reputation" is key in so many areas of life (Prov. 22:1)! In connection with the Thessalonians, we know that what Paul taught is what he practiced (I Cor. 9:27). May this be true of us! Ezra of old behaved in a manner consistent with his teaching, as did Jesus (Ezra 7:10; Acts 1:1). Preachers, do your actions match your preaching? Some need to repent!

Exhorting, Encouraging, And Charging (v. 11-12)

This is the final responsibility noted in this section of Scripture. Notice please that the preacher is

to *"exhort," "encourage,"* and *"charge"* that men and women, *"walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you unto his own kingdom and glory"* (v. 12)! This message was not limited to the Thessalonians, though. Paul had the same prayer for the Colossian Christians (Col. 1:9-10). How this type of living is needed today! Christians need to be reminded at times of Who they are serving! This life is not meant to be a pursuit of worldly things. Those things are temporary at best (Matt. 6:19-21; II Cor. 4:18). Let us all walk worthy of God that we might see Heaven one day.

Conclusion

Are the preachers here obeying I Thessalonians 2? Hopefully, you see these attributes in these men the longer we are together. What is set forth in I Thessalonians 2 is a tall order, but it can be accomplished, and folks will be blessed when we do things the "Bible way", following the Bible pattern, not merely in this area of life, but in all areas of life!! (Col. 3:17)

"Truth is universal — that is the reason a person sometimes thinks the speaker is aiming every thing he says at him."

~ R.L. Whiteside

See episodes Of "The Ancient Landmark"
www.youtube.com/TheOldPaths1994



I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

Come and meet with the church of Christ in Caneyville.

Location: 101 N. Main Street Caneyville, KY

Meeting Times:

Sunday Bible Study	_____	10:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship	_____	10:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship	_____	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	_____	7:00 p.m.

**"The Ancient Landmark" Television Show airs on You Tube
(www.youtube.com/TheOldPaths1994) and Insight Cable, channel 6**

**"The Ancient Landmark" Radio program airs on WXMZ, 106.3 FM Mon-Fri at
1:00 pm. It is also broadcast on www.thez.voyagetech.com**

Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs

Phone: (270) 589-4167